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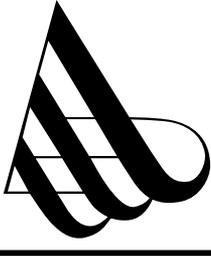
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WithumSmith+Brown, PC is proud to support the Black Maria Film Festival for celebrating and preserving the diversity, invention and vitality of the short film and for bringing the arts to the community.

Wishing the Black Maria Film Festival a great season!

Maureen DeCicco, CPA, Partner
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From the Festival Director, Jane Steuerwald

The history of film began with the short. The first films, including those created in Thomas Edison's "Black Maria" film studio in West Orange, were about a minute long. Film was a novelty, and entertainment for the masses was the goal of early film pioneers.

In 1877, Thomas Edison invented the phonograph. It soon became the most popular home entertainment device in history. Edison saw even more potential in the link between sound and image and commissioned his young lab assistant William Dickson, to develop a motion picture camera to complement the phonograph. The result was Dickson's invention – the Kinetograph - which addressed the problem of recording and reproducing moving images.

In 1895, Edison bought the rights to a state-of-the-art projector, developed by the American inventor Thomas Armat, and in early 1896 Edison began to manufacture and market it as his own invention. On April 23, 1896 in New York City, Edison's Vitascope brought motion picture projection to the United States and was at the forefront of American film exhibition for years.

In honor of the tradition of Edison, we are proud to celebrate the Black Maria Film Festival's 36th consecutive year of "fueling the independent spirit." Edison was truly the quintessential American inventor – a fiercely independent man who moved forward with his vision against all odds. The filmmakers represented in this year's Black Maria collection have done exactly that. Their films shine a light on injustice, celebrate the indomitable human spirit, and entertain and teach us from frame to frame.

Through the arts we grow and feed our highest selves – our understanding of who we are and who others are, and our ability to empathize and to reconcile the many paradoxical aspects of our experience as human beings.

For audiences touched by the films in Black Maria touring programs, the impact is real: our lives are forever changed through the great gift of art.

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Retaining an Intuitive Approach in Feature-length Animation: Four Recent Examples

by Tess Martin

Award-Winning Independent Animator

Red Turtle (80 mins): <http://www.wildbunch.biz/movie/red-turtle-the/>

La Jeune Fille Sans Mains (73 mins): <http://www.shellac-altern.org/films/422>

And We Were Young (75 mins): <http://www.andwewereyoung.com/>

Torrey Pines (60 mins): <https://www.torreypinesfilm.com>

Independent animation has a long history and exists in many contexts. You can find it at film festivals, on the internet, or in art galleries. And yet the medium of animation is still most commonly identified with big studio projects: Disney, Pixar, or, if you meet a stop-motion fan, LAIKA. This is, of course, a shame. If I could have a nickel for every time someone has asked me, after learning I make animation, if I wanted to work for Pixar, I would be a wealthy, rather than cash-strapped, animator. And yet independent animation is still going strong, with interesting, inspiring and awesome results. If you're looking for inspiration, check out some work from some of my favorite contemporary animators, like Vladimir Leschiov, Cesar Diaz Melendez, Nicolai Troshinsky, or Nicolas Fong, or for more context: Caroline Leaf, Yuri Norstein and Jan Svankmajer.

The format with the most advocates within the independent animation community is probably the short film. This format is conducive to an 'auteur' approach, where the creator works primarily alone or with a few trusted collaborators. But there are also people who make long-form animated work in a similar way as short work, that is, outside the studio system. These films are often characterized by non-traditional story structures, creative animation techniques, a strong vision, and as Dutch animator/director Michael Dudok de Wit stated at a symposium in September

2016, “a strong dose of intuition.” In this article I will be outlining four examples of recent feature-length animated films that retain, in some measure, an auteur approach (these are just four recent ones! For more, look into Chris Sullivan, Don Hertzfeldt, Elliot Cowan, Anca Damian or Signe Baumane).

A note before beginning: just because I have chosen to focus on four recent feature-length films does not mean that a feature-length project is necessarily the ultimate goal for all animators. Especially in animation, short films are a format complete unto themselves. There should be no expectation that animators who make short films should be interested in making feature-length films. And if there is, people who hold those expectations must not be aware of the tremendous ability animation has to pack a punch in a short time. But feature-length films are also interesting, and all the more challenging in animation because this dense medium can be overwhelming over long periods if not treated properly. And it is undeniable that feature-length projects still, despite all the various ways we are consuming video nowadays, have more distribution options than shorts. Simply put, it is more likely that a lay person will hear about your feature-length film than they will your short film.

And yet, within the feature film realm, it is relatively much less likely that someone will hear about Sebastien Laudenbach’s *The Girl Without Hands*, or about Andy Smetanka’s *And We Were Young*, compared with the latest animated feature film churned out by studios. That makes this an interesting niche: films that are the ‘appropriate’ duration of a conventional viewing (60-90 mins), and yet are made in a very non-mainstream way: by a small team working under strong artistic, and yes, intuitive, direction.

Michael Dudok de Wit, mentioned briefly earlier, is one filmmaker with experience in both formats, having, one might say, conquered the festival circuit in 2000 with his short lyrical animation *Father and Daughter* (which won an Academy Award the following year), and just recently completed his first feature film, titled *The Red Turtle*. *The Red Turtle* is an 80-minute animated film without dialog

about a man shipwrecked on a tropical island. It's a beautiful film that runs at a cool, languid pace that might be considered slow by mainstream audiences. It has enough of a story to keep the viewer engaged, but doesn't provide all the answers at the end.

The film was co-produced by the famed Studio Ghibli (responsible for *Spirited Away*, *Princess Mononoke* and other classics). This collaboration means the film has one foot in the studio system (a Japanese, open-minded studio system, but a studio system nonetheless) and one foot in the independent world (due to Dudok de Wit's strong roots in the auteur realm). This makes it an interesting case study of a film that managed, in a way, to do both, to live in both contexts. It benefitted from the strong vision of its director, and yet the film was produced by a team of people spread out across multiple locations, making the workflow more reminiscent of a studio's (though I'm sure the team was a fraction of the size of that responsible for Pixar's recent *Finding Dory* or *Inside Out*). In a recent lecture, Dudok de Wit emphasized the importance of holding on to an intuitive approach to composition, design and storytelling. It is interesting in and of itself that he was successful in doing this throughout his studio filmmaking experience. In 2016 *The Red Turtle* competed at Cannes (where it won a Special Prize in the Un Certain Regard section) and opened the Annecy International Animation Festival. The film was released theatrically in France in June, in the Netherlands in July and in Japan in September 2016. At the time of writing the status of a potential US theatrical release is not known.

La Jeune Fille Sans Mains or *The Girl Without Hands* is a 73-minute animated film created by French animator/filmmaker Sebastien Laudenbach. It is loosely based on a Brothers Grimm fairytale about a man who accidentally sells his daughter to the devil. The visuals were created by the director chronologically with paint on paper animation, in a more or less improvised manner. The drawings of the film are intentionally left unrefined, and the story is unrelenting and brutal, though it ultimately has a happy ending and the stoic heroine keeps the viewer engaged. The film screened at Cannes and Annecy (winning a jury mention), will be released in French

cinemas in December 2016 and was acquired for North American distribution by GKIDS, though a release date in this region is not immediately clear.

And We Were Young is a 75-minute documentary created by independent filmmaker Andy Smetanka in his home studio in Missoula, Montana. It was animated one frame at a time using backlit paper cut-outs, and was shot on Super-8. It uses as a starting point first-person testimonials from US soldiers who had been sent to France in WWI and these testimonials are narrated over the action. The film follows a loose narrative: we see the soldiers training, then being sent overseas, then confronting first-hand the horrors of war. But the film does not focus on one particular character over another. In fact, the silhouette cut-out technique means that it is difficult to distinguish one human cut-out from another. This produces at first, a disorienting effect, as we try to parse through the myriad experiences, but it soon comes to feel appropriate: we are experiencing instead the overwhelming feelings of going to war, and identifying with all of the characters, rather than one in particular. *And We Were Young* is currently finishing up its festival run, and unfortunately has not met with the same festival success as the two previous examples, meaning the chances of it attracting theatrical distribution are limited.

Torrey Pines is a 60-minute feature film created with paper cut-outs by Seattle artist/ animator/musician Clyde Petersen, and a small team of assistants in Clyde's basement studio. It is based on the true story of Clyde going on a cross-country road trip at the age of twelve with his schizophrenic mother. It is full of bright colours, has no dialog and adopts a naïve style somehow appropriate to the point of view of the pre-pubescent main character. The project is not just a film, but also a touring theatrical show, with the score performed live by Clyde Petersen's own band Your Heat Breaks, as well as guest musicians. The film has just started its festival run, and its first North American tour (showing in small theatres, DIY spaces, museums, etc.) is almost complete. Clyde hopes that festivals screening the film will be open to having the score performed live as well. *Torrey Pines* will probably not receive traditional theatrical distribution,

but it is possible it will be picked up by a niche distributor and likely that it will eventually end up on a VOD platform. Clyde works with a producer, and is himself highly adept at navigating these types of practicalities.

Each of these projects is unique: *The Red Turtle* started out with the best possible chances of success, being co-produced by Studio Ghibli. *The Girl Without Hands*, though created more or less independently, benefitted from the arrival of a French producer just in time for its festival run, no doubt aiding its chances of finding its way into the hands of GKIDS, its North American distributor. The *And We Were Young* team is doing the best it can without a dedicated producer, and being based in Montana creates challenges for animation-related networking). *Torrey Pines* is forging its own path via independent venues, eschewing the traditional distribution order of festivals-theatrical-VOD.

Each of these projects had a different path to creation, with different size budgets, varied numbers of team members, expertise, and now, different distribution possibilities. And yet for all their differences, it is important to note that each film retains the original vision of its director and is a unique feature-length viewing experience. Though the big studio films might always get more notoriety (along with bigger marketing budgets), they aren't the only type of animation out there. Here's hoping that with time, and with the diversification of our viewing habits, these alternative long-form works will more readily and successfully reach their audiences.

Tess Martin is an independent animator who works with cut-outs, ink, paint, sand or objects. She has received grants and residencies in support of her films, which have displayed at galleries and festivals worldwide. Tess runs and moderates the monthly Manifest Animation Show & Tell events in Rotterdam, where she is based, and is the director of Haptic Animation Amplifier, a non-profit that helps support & distribute animation from the Pacific Northwest of the USA.



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***What I Learned Making
My First Documentary Film***

by Christopher Upham

Writer, Director, and Actor

Filmmakers S. Smith Patrick and William Farley forced me into making my first documentary film. Well, not really, but when I found out on the Internet that the men I had fought with in Vietnam had believed that I had been dead for 30 years, their encouragement and my own narrative instinct told me that a good story was lurking in there somewhere. So I went for it. Smith Patrick agreed to shoot and so we got on a plane to up-state New York for a reunion of the 299th, Engineers, my old Army unit.

Quite frankly, I didn't know what the hell I was doing and knew next to nothing about documentary, despite having performed paid work in the film industry for years as an actor, screenwriter, assistant editor, PA, producer, etc. I did have a decent notion of story and a romantic idea of being a director, mostly from the narrative side of filmmaking. I read what I could about documentary, tried to outline my ideas and formulate a vision.

Our first interviews were a bit of a disaster – inadequate sound made worse by my first directorial insistence - that we shoot outside on the grassy banks of the Niagara River, beset by roaring speedboats under a terrible blinding light that made the sweating interviewees squint and screw up their faces. But

the characters had opened up to me about Vietnam in a way they hadn't before to anyone else, including their wives.

My intent was to try and make a film to let an audience feel like they had gone to Vietnam and then come back after the war. I didn't know what that entailed, how I was going to do it, how long it might take or how much money it might cost. If I had known those things, I might not have made the film. But something inside told me that I had to tell this story. I slowly realized that I was also driven to find out whether I really was capable of learning and practicing the many skills – financial, technical, psychological, emotional, physical as well as the raw courage - that it takes to finish any film.

At that 299th Engineers reunion, we collected stories and many photographs from a dozen men and their wives. As I looked and listened to the footage, I realized that I wasn't just telling my own story – but that of our 600-man battalion, abandoned by the American Army up at remote Dak To firebase, which became surrounded by thousands of North Vietnamese Army regulars. Eventually, our unit suffered 50% casualties, mainly because President Nixon wanted to 'prove' that the South Vietnamese Army could run their own war, which never happened.

As I read and researched and tried to figure out a way to make the film, I also set about collecting more images. At the next reunion, I talked about my film and in passing, mentioned that it had really helped me psychologically to return to Vietnam, which I had done in 1992 as a guest of the Hanoi Writer's Union with acclaimed poet Bruce Weigl. I must have struck a chord, because four veterans agreed to go back with me - our Colonel, Newman Howard, Duffy Dubendorf, John Marcoulier and William Christie. All of a sudden, the film's structure came clear – I would tell the 299th's story as we journeyed back to

Dak To firebase.

Six months later, we five American men were back in Vietnam, touring in a large Mercedes van with two Vietnamese guides and Smith Patrick on camera and sound. All of the men paid their own way and I financed the rest, figuring this gamble was the best chance to capture the images and sounds that I needed for the film. We spent three weeks together in Vietnam, filming and traveling the length of the country from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi. The journey was emotional and thrilling and fun and scary and wrought with all the daily pressures and joys of film production. I think we shot 45 hours of footage and took thousands of still photographs. What we came away with, was run and gun footage of Dak To where we had fought as young soldiers as well as chance street encounters in Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, Cu Chi and Hanoi. We also shot numerous interviews with the principals along the way.

Upon our return, I spent the next few months digitizing and logging footage, marking up good takes and making a three-hour boxcar cut. The story was far rougher than I had imagined and the sound and picture were not of the quality of the Hollywood film in my imagination. Still, there was something powerful in the footage and all the characters had been visibly moved during the trip to Vietnam. But the project needed a lot of work. I learned a lot – chiefly that I should have hired a sound person, but intuitively I felt that at least I had come away with the emotional spine of a movie. My logistical choice in having Smith and I live and travel with the principals on a long road trip had fostered a rare trust and a deep intimacy that a larger, more professional crew might easily have ruptured.

I hired editors and together we produced a very rough hour-plus cut. We also cut a seven-minute sample reel, which be-

came critical for securing two seed grants, one from the Pacific Pioneer Fund and another from the Fleishhacker Foundation. The grants were a much needed pat on the back for what looked like and would prove to be a long, arduous but ultimately rewarding post-production.

While any journey film inherently has a strong structure, the downside is that these stories can easily devolve into an episodic travelogue. An old friend and wonderful editor, Traci Loth became involved with the project and Heist Films and then filmmaker Amanda Micheli (*Double Dare*, *La Corona*, *Haveababy*) generously gave us office space. As we began to assemble sequences and scenes, complications emerged. We discovered that we were actually telling three substantial stories – our present day return to Vietnam, the 1969 story of what happened at Dak To and how we five soldiers had been personally affected by combat. As a war film and a Vietnam film, we had to objectively present a complex history underscored by narration to add context and clarity to the interviews and the verite footage from the Vietnam trip.

Since I wanted to present the most accurate visual portrait of 1969 Dak To, I decided to go to the National Archive's Motion Picture section in College Park, Maryland. The principals – John Marcoulier and Bill Christie came to Washington with me - and Newman Howard joined us from Arlington, Virginia. I roped them into going to the archives for three days, where we ended up finding a lot of Vietnam footage – much of it from Dak To. NARA Mopic is a great resource for any war or historical film because the rights to use our government's footage are free, though you do have to pay for film/video transfers. We left with 25 hours of dirty dub low resolution duplicates from the archive. I made two more trips to NARA and collected fifty more hours of footage, which we used for the edit until final cut, when we ordered high resolution files for the final color

correction, sound mix and output.

With most of the footage on hand, post-production got fully underway. Because of our low budget and Traci's availability we could only work a third to half time, so the editing process stretched out and eventually took four years. Smith and I continued to return to the 299th Engineer reunions and kept shooting interviews and gathering still photographs and Super 8 film footage that other soldiers had shot at Dak To.

These interviews proved critical to characterizing all five men. In the film, Traci cut an 'arc' of emotional growth for each man which expressed both the truth of the person and our story's needs. In a fiction film, these arcs are carefully scripted, dramatized, realized by actors and then blocked in scenes and then shot in many angles, which are carefully edited from multiple takes to enhance an emotional tone. But in a documentary, you often have to be creative in how you economically show a character's genuine self, their growth and resolutions. As you might suspect, 'real' people don't often show their emotional changes in their short time before the camera. Traci proved extremely adept at searching out tiny pieces of dialogue and picture that supported the characters' film portrayals from the raw trip footage, bolstered by cutaways to archival footage, which eventually grew to 270 hours of video.

For long, emotionally complex films, editing is perhaps the most critical craft in making a powerful documentary film. The subtle correspondence between image and sound and nuance and subtext that moves an audience is hard to define and even harder to create. A good editor is a powerful storyteller who finds surprising ways of compressing and illuminating story and character's conflict points, while underscoring critical shifts of perception and behavior and story, without compromising tone and truth. Every film is a fiction; choices are

made. I believe the only truth is the final film itself – for which audiences play a critical role by receiving and communicating and discovering meaning for themselves. It's a strange mix of truth and ambiguity and intuition that creates the marriage of film and audience and almost as indefinable and mysterious as life itself.

The cost of adequately finishing a film is often shocking, but not as shocking as how unrealized the film will be if you don't do it. All the subtleties of story and image and character are nuanced into the audience's perception through powerful sound editing and mix and the intricate layering of music and dialogue and effects and the way color plays with and enhances the themes. We were very lucky to work with some very talented collaborators, Luciano Chessa the composer, Jim LeBrecht of Berkeley Sound Artists and Gary Coates, the colorist – all worked closely with Producer/Editor Traci Loth. As we moved through the finishing process, the depth of understanding and craft that professionals infuse into final output went far beyond my expectations.

There's an old saying in the story consulting field that in a successfully realized film, the protagonist's journey in the film story mirrors the screenwriter/filmmaker's struggle while making the film and reflects a psychological change that deepens the work of the maker. Since I had experienced the Vietnam war along with the main characters, it fell to me to narrate the film to clarify and expand and deepen what we discovered in the images and sounds as we created *Return to Dak To*.

I have been blessed with a decent voice and have narrated a number of films and played on stage and film many times as an actor, but never in my own story. It was a challenge, trying to express the emotional changes that I experienced in making the film, but I hope they are carried by my voice. I don't know

if creators are ever fully satisfied by their creations, but I have had the satisfaction of audiences telling me that Return to Dak To allowed them to express long buried emotions about the Vietnam War, a very difficult subject for most Americans.

As writer Michael Herr ended his landmark book, *Dispatches: Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam*, we've all been there.

Christopher Upham is a writer and visual storyteller. He has collaborated with filmmakers Paul Saltzman, Ellen Perry, Lynn Hershman-Leeson, Tom Schlesinger, Hisham Bizri and playwright John O'Keefe. Christopher's fiction has been anthologized in Maxine Hong-Kingston's "Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace." His documentary film "Return to Dak To" was his directorial debut.

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**The 36th Annual
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**JURY'S
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AWARDS**

Mr. Sand

Animation

by Soetkin Verstegen

Leuven, Belgium. 8 min.



A dreamy tale about early cinema, told as an ironic bedtime story. A mix of techniques brings to life the atmosphere of this dangerous new medium. In the back of the story moves Mr. Sand, a

mysterious character that might be real or imagined.



A Bastard Child

Documentary

by Knutte Wester

Umea, Sweden. 57 min.

In 1909, in an undemocratic Sweden, a bastard child is born and given the name of Hervor. Her mother is unmarried, due to which she is called a “whore” and is driven from her home. Hervor grows up at shelters and orphanages, unwanted, rejected by society.



As an adult she spends her life struggling for social justice. In

old age she tells us her story. Director Knutte Wester brings his grandmother's memories to life through hand-painted animated images and has us witness someone being rejected in order to unite others. A story that all too often still repeats itself.



Scrapped

Experimental

by Seoungcho Cho
Elmhurst, NY. 18 min.

“Religious rituals are complex and layered. As I have participated or confronted these religious rituals throughout my life as a non-believer, I have also personally experienced spirituality yet also felt it as



an unfathomable human behavior and performance. Buddhist rituals give me a kind of metaphysical intimacy with the concepts of reliance, unconcern, death, extinction and absolution, while being charged with an enormous incomprehensible energy. I wanted to convey the immense complexity of this labyrinth—like spiritual constructions and the energy they create in my work, which I execute through obsessive observance.”

How Do You Raise a Black Child?

Narrative

by Seyi Peter-Thomas
South Orange, NJ. 4 min.

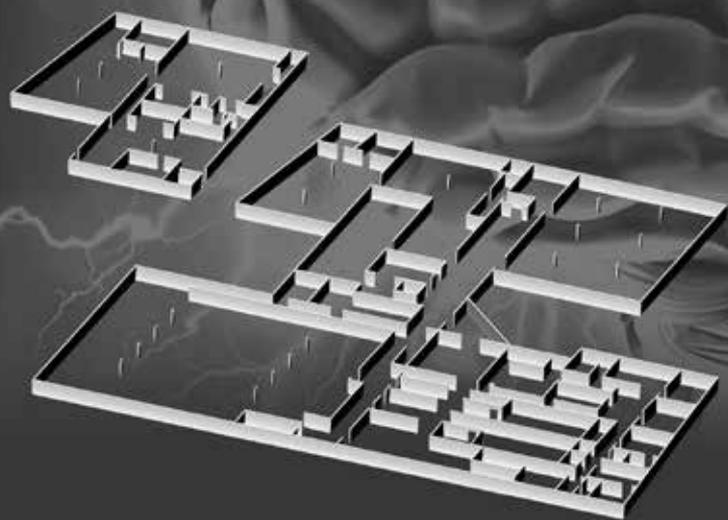


This short film adaptation of Cortney Lamar Charleston’s poem “How Do You Raise a Black Child?” paints an important portrait of everyday life for a young

black man growing up in America. It is an impressionistic piece that explores the delicate balance parents must strike as they steer their children toward adulthood.

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**GLOBAL INSIGHTS
STELLAR
AWARDS**

Altimir

Documentary

by Kay Hannahan

Jackson Heights, NY. 18 min.



Since the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, Bulgaria has experienced the most extreme population decline in the world. Low birth rates, high death rates, and two large waves of emigration

have erased many villages from Bulgaria's map and pushed others to the verge of extinction. This short documentary explores life in Altimir, one of Bulgaria's disappearing villages. As he rides his bike through the quiet village, Yordan Dimitrov is our guide to the life that remains.



Radiance (Resplendor)

Documentary

by Fernando Priego Ruiz

Buenos Aires, Argentina. 50 min.

At the foot of the Patagonian Andes, Camilo Peña is an old gaucho suffering from a disease that is leading him to blindness. He knows that sooner or later his worsening condition will bring him to the edge of darkness. This sensitive portrait is imbued with light and grace and reflects details of Camilo's daily life and the way in which nature always comes into its own. His wish is to stay among his animals, isolated in the harsh winter, in the beautiful mountains where he is still a free man.





The Land Beneath Our Feet

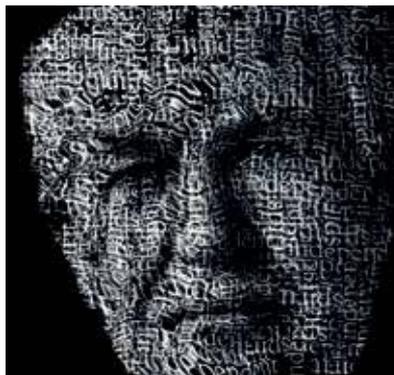
Documentary

by Sarita Siegel and Gregg Mitman
Madison, WI. 60 min.

Today, more than 25 percent of land has been granted by the Liberian government to multinational corporations for agricultural, mining, and logging concessions in the name of international development. Liberia is a



microcosm of the ways in which plantation agriculture is altering livelihoods and cultures across the globe. When the earliest known surviving motion picture record of Liberia resurfaced - rare archival footage from a 1926 Harvard expedition to Liberia documenting the country's first corporate land grab in 1926 - it began a collaborative project to repatriate the footage to a country seeking to write a more inclusive history of its past after a brutal 14-year civil war. This effort has been at the center of *The Land Beneath Our Feet*, a journey that became a four-year investigation into history, memory, and present-day land conflicts in Liberia.





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**JURY'S
CHOICE
AWARDS**

A

Narrative

by Joseph Houlberg

Quito, Ecuador. 14 min.



A world with only one letter. The earliest certain ancestor of the letter A is aleph, the first letter of the Phoenician alphabet. In turn, the ancestor of aleph may have been a pictogram of an ox head

in proto-Sinaitic script influenced by Egyptian hieroglyphs, styled as a triangular head with two horns extended. This story begins with that one essential letter – A.



All it Takes

Documentary

by Geoff Pingree, Drew Dickler, and Jake

Hochendoner

Oberlin, OH. 17 min.

With the ever-growing prescription and use of opiate pain medication, heroin addiction has spread across traditional barriers of class, race, gender, and age and become common in all segments of society.

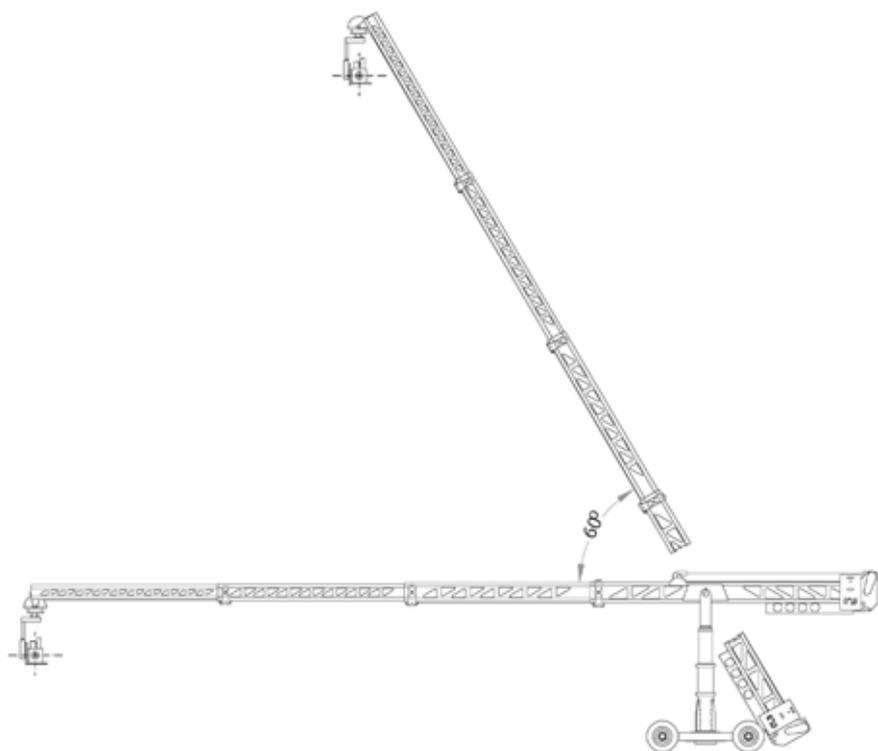


While the path to addiction is distressingly easy, the way out is unimaginably difficult. *All it Takes* explores the opiate epidemic in Lorain County, OH from the point of view of addicts and through the efforts of those who work to help them recover their lives and their dignity.



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A Way Back

Narrative

by Alan King

Victoria, Australia. 15 min.

Leo Amsel is a man haunted by a decision that he made while serving as a young soldier in France during World War II. Many years later, he is offered an opportunity to atone. This story focuses on his inner conflict defined by two distinct themes: remorse and his inability to accept the finality of his past actions.

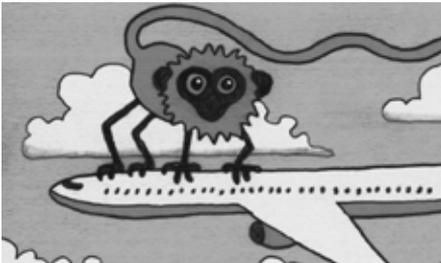


Boomerang

Animation

by Steven Vander Meer

Arcata, CA. 5 min.



Inspired by the song “Boomerang” by the Absynth Quintet, the workings of nature and the universe are mystically and whimsically illustrated in this fast paced, gorgeously hand-drawn film.

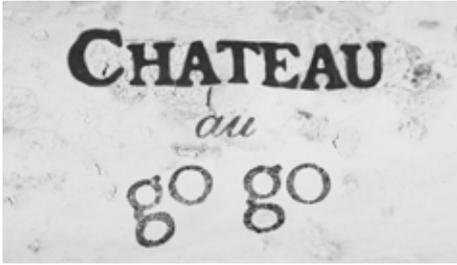
Great music and a quirky sense of humor define the beauty of it all, and it’s no coincidence when it happens this way.

Chateau au Go Go

Animation

by Steve Gentile

Boston, MA. 4 min.



A kinetic romp that investigates the images imprinted onto wine corks. This animated, macro-photographed film becomes a sort of frenetic history lesson that alludes to the

human impulse to tame nature.



Forty-two American contemporary choreographers link together on a chain love letter to dance.

Exquisite Corps

Experimental

by Mitchell Rose

Worthington, OH. 6 min.





Já Passou (Already Passed)

Narrative

by Sebastião Salgado and Pedro Patrocinio
Lisbon, Portugal. 15 min.

The story of a father's journey to save his son and how he is affected by indifference and social inequality.



Microspectrum

Experimental

by Kate Balsley

Johns Creek, GA. 2 min.



A surreal journey through the natural world. Leaves, flowers and other organic materials are abstracted and exist as shapes, forms, colors and textures. Nature is at once strange and beautiful. *Microspectrum*

invites the viewer to reflect upon its complexities.

Monument

Experimental

by Marcin Gizycki

Warszawa, Poland. 3 min.



The secret life of monumental sculptures from the Soviet Military Cemetery in Warsaw, Poland.



More Dangerous Than a Thousand Rioters

Experimental

by Kelly Gallagher

Chester Springs, PA. 6 min.

An experimental animated documentary exploring the life of revolutionary Lucy Parsons, the wife of Haymarket anarchist Albert Parsons. She was an organizer first and



foremost and led an inspiring life engaged in the struggle against capitalism. As a woman of color who was married to a famous white male anarchist, she is often unfairly and frustratingly overlooked in many labor histories. Parsons went on to become one of the most powerful voices in the labor movement, helping to found the legendary Industrial Workers of the World. She dedicated her entire life to fighting for the rights of the disenfranchised.



Prison Fight

Documentary

by Robert Pilichowski

Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 16 min.

Two men, Sean McNabb and Komkit Ketnawk are from opposite ends of the globe. This film is a window into their lives as they move towards facing each other in a prison fight in Thailand.



Rabbit Blood

Animation

by Yagmur Altan

Astoria, NY. 5 min.



Just an ordinary day at an old mysterious Turkish country house where its residents have an extraordinary way of brewing tea.

The Boxer

Documentary

by Craig Cutler

New York, NY. 15 min.



An intimate portrait of Chordale Booker, a USA boxing elite men's division 165-lb national champion. As a child he sold drugs on a street corner and as a teenager he was arrested for

gun possession, an offense that carried a 13-year sentence. An understanding judge saw something in Chordale and gave him a second chance at life, which Chordale used to find the champion within himself.



The Sandman

Documentary

by Lauren Knapp

Alexandria, VA. 19 min.

Dr. Carlo Musso has been helping the state of Georgia execute inmates by lethal injection since 2003. The medical community strongly and unanimously opposes the



use of medicine for executions. Yet, most states practicing lethal injection require a physician presence. In exchange, they offer a cloak of anonymity. This film explores Dr. Musso's own moral equivocation and justification for providing "end of life care" within the correctional environment, while personally opposing capital punishment.



TYSON!

Narrative

by Rebecca Ocampo
and Matthew Leutwyler
Toluca Lake, CA. 18 min.

After being abandoned by his mother at the village medical clinic, a young boy named Tyson spends his days making the best of his new living arrangement. A volunteer nurse takes an interest in him and



fights the local bureaucracy that forces patients to stay if they cannot pay their bill. Set in Kenya, *TYSON!* is a story that shines a light on healthcare, orphaned children, and poverty in the developing world.

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**JURY'S
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SPIRIT

9 Months in the Bronx

Documentary

by Anna Bressanin

New York, NY. 27 min.



Felicia is 22, she's from the Bronx, and she's pregnant. She knows that as soon as she gives birth, the Administration for Children's Services may come to the hospital and take her baby away, and she's determined to stop that from happening.

This film follows the course of her pregnancy through to the birth and the final conference, where it's decided if she can take her baby home or not.



Auto

Experimental

by Connor Griffith

Toluca Lake, CA. 6 min.

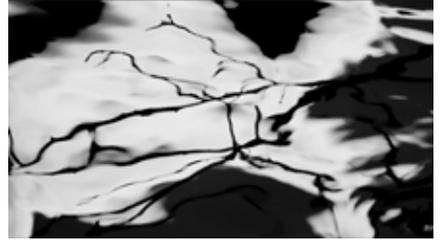
An exploration of temporal patterns found in routinized pathways. Automobiles and pedestrians are torn from their linear relationship to time to demonstrate the machinery behind our fourth dimensional veil.





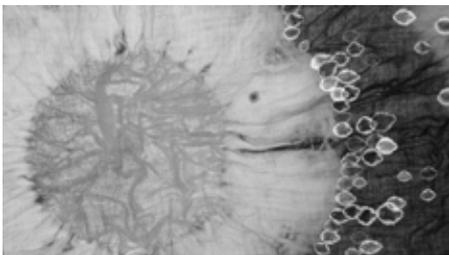
Black River
Experimental
by Eeva Siivonen
Utica, NY. 13 min.

A visual essay about perpetual metamorphosis. Through a rhetorical and poetical dialogue between language, image and sound - transient shapes, imagined beings and their voices, repeatedly emerge from and disappear into their environments.



In the Waves

Animation
by Ying-Fang Shen
Richmond, VA. 5 min.



Inspired by the filmmaker's pregnancy in 2014. "The changes in my body and mind made me feel immense interest in the initial starting point of life and so I began to work on depicting the passing of this brief, but magical moment." Primitive creatures at the beginning of life are revealed through the folds and textures of tie-dyed fabric through the perspective of a microscope.

Joan

Documentary

by Nathan Pancione

Norwalk, CT. 7 min.



A portrait of a woman whose grit and disposition helped her to conquer great adversity. At a young age, Joan always wanted a big family and a place on the ocean. By the age of 20 she was

diagnosed with sarcoma and had to face hard choices. After 60 years, 22 surgeries, and a beautiful life, she reflects on her incredible journey.



Koropokkuru

Experimental

by Akiko Maruyama and Philippe Roy

Jersey City, NJ. 4 min.

Koropokkuru are a race of small people in the folklore of the Ainu people of the northern Japanese islands. Inspired by concepts from the folktale, Koropokkuru is an indescribable force that can be humanlike or embody itself within displayed objects.





Make Them Believe

Documentary

by Taimi Arvidson

Brooklyn, NY. 13 min.

Thousands of miles away from the US, a WWE-obsessed Russian college kid named Tim lives out his fantasy of becoming an American professional wrestling star through monthly battles in Moscow's underground ring as the character "American Hope." The anti-US crowd boos him endlessly but he doesn't care; each match paves the way to potential wrestling stardom. Tim finally has his chance to gain notoriety by fighting Russia's veteran wrestler "Ivan the Locomotive" - a guy twice his size and twice his age - for the Moscow Championship belt.



No Harm No Foul

Documentary

by Cheng Zhang

Stanford, CA. 22 min.



Triggered by the water crisis in Flint, MI, the issue of lead contamination in drinking water has been brought under the spotlight for months since 2015. Twelve years ago a similar lead crisis occurred in

Washington DC, and the harm to people's health was actually twenty to thirty times worse than in Flint. History is clearly repeating itself, but the question is why. *No Harm No Foul* probes this systemic problem and uncovers a story of corrosion, cover-ups and the corruption of science.

Roxy

Narrative

by Fabien Colas, Luxembourg and
Emile Schlessler, Düsseldorf, Germany.
9 min.



Roxy is an aging prostitute, working in a so-called “love mobile” on the German-Luxembourgish border. After being rescued from a brutal rape, she meets Jeff, a young man, whose presence and intentions are unclear to her. This film was inspired by a wave of violence in Germany, when people living nearby set some of the women’s trailers on fire to force them to relocate. The filmmakers shine a light on this disturbing issue by highlighting one woman’s humanity.



The Boy by the Sea

Narrative

by Vasily Chuprina
Amersfoort, The Netherlands. 7 min.



The story of an unlikely friendship: A young boy deep in thought and filled with melancholy, watches his stones fall as he throws them out across the water.

An old lighthouse keeper approaches, filled with care and concern for the child. The two unite in their wonderment of what lies ahead - as they try to find a different truth beyond the waters.



The Itching

Animation

by Dianne Bellino
Astoria, NY. 15 min.

In this parable, a shy wolf tries to connect with a group of hip, party-loving bunnies but finds her body is in revolt. An intensely visceral film, *The Itching* investigates our primal longing for connection and reveals the vulnerability, anxiety, and ambivalence embedded there.



The Last Projectionist

Documentary

by Eugene Lehnert
Brooklyn, NY. 11 min.



As movie studios ceased distribution of film prints to theaters in favor of the more affordable 'DCP' (Digital Cinema Package), small theaters were left with a hard choice: upgrade or close. This burden

left mom and pop movie theaters financially vulnerable with none more vulnerable than the classic outdoor cinema, the drive-in. *The Last Projectionist* follows the story of a family owned drive-in in upstate New York dealing with the costly decision to either upgrade or 'go dark.'

There's Too Many of These Crows

Animation

by Morgan Miller

Brooklyn, NY. 4 min.



Birds and humans are unable to co-exist peacefully in this film about aggression and escalation.



Where We Stand

Documentary

by Kristine Stolakis

San Francisco, CA. 20 min.

Abby Hansen is a stay-at-home mom turned vocal advocate for Ordain Women as she navigates the repercussions of her unpopular activism against her church in her predominantly Mormon suburb. *Where We Stand* is also the coming of age story of Ordain Women as an organization itself—from a humble website to an internationally recognized activist group.





**The 36th Annual
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**DIRECTOR'S
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AWARDS**

Beneath a Glass Floor Lobby

Documentary

by Lisa Danker

Orlando, FL. 5 min.



A short essay film shot on Super 8 about recent archaeological discoveries dating back to 600 AD in the rapidly growing coastal city of Miami, Florida. Architectural remains of a once-thriving native Tequesta village excavated at the city's 'birth-

place' on the Miami River suggest that the settlement was permanent, built on and near the water. Recordings from public hearings weave citizens' concerns about city planning with the filmmaker's voiceover. What may be at stake when we fail to adequately preserve and honor both the recent and ancient past?



Call Me Ray

Documentary

by James Hollenbaugh

Lancaster, PA. 12 min.

Raymond Kirkpatrick is 84 years old. He lives in a trailer in the woods in Central Pennsylvania. He has spent over thirty years turning his yard into a curious patchwork of strangely affective "outsider" artworks.



Celia Johnson

Animation

by Luke Jaeger

Northampton, MA. 4 min.



Public domain and original imagery combine in this lush Winterpills music video. A trip through a series of fanciful landscapes bursting with exotic plants, extinct fauna, vintage botanical illustrations, and impossible creatures.



Decision

Animation

by Mary Jo Zefeldt

Chicago, IL. 3 min.



A short animated film that explores one woman's experience with anxiety and how she handles a perceived false choice.

Left on Pearl

Documentary

by Susie Rivo

Cambridge, MA. 54 min.



In 1971 classified ads for employment were still segregated by gender, battered women's shelters did not exist, abortion was illegal, and married women couldn't open a bank account

without their husbands' permission. *Left on Pearl* is about the movement that changed all that. The film focuses on a highly significant but little-known event in the history of the women's liberation movement, the 1971 takeover and occupation of a Harvard University-owned building by hundreds of Boston area women.



Mema's Life Story

Experimental

by Magdalena Bermudez

Baltimore, MD. 2 min.

A 16mm film exploring displacement, documentation, and dialogue through an imagined conversation between the filmmaker's godmother and her grandmother. Hole-punched 16mm leader interrupts their dialogue, an emulation of the lace the grandmother carried as she fled the Armenian genocide from Talas, through Egypt and eventually to New York City. Interweaving their dialogue and her abstracted lace, the filmmaker attempts to preserve her godmother's grandmother's story while evoking the poetic fragility of inherited memory.

what do you carry?

scissors and lace



My Earth's Eye

Experimental

by Paul Turano

Roslindale, MA. 8 min.

A portrait of a pond near the filmmaker's childhood home, a personal inventory of a place where he explored nature and the nature of being on the earth and of the earth. It was here his parents taught him how to look and listen. Shot with a mix of analog film mediums and devices, through scientific and poetic lenses.



Oh My

Animation

by Tess Martin

Rotterdam, Netherlands. 4 min.



A starry night, tracks in the snow. A girl desperately pursues a creature into a desolate, surreal, white landscape. This music video for the Australian band, The Animators, was created with painted plastic cut-outs and tissue paper and animated one frame at a time on a multi-plane animation stand.

A starry night, tracks in the snow. A girl desperately pursues a creature into a desolate, surreal, white landscape. This music video for the Australian band, The Animators, was created with painted plastic cut-outs and tissue paper and animated one frame at a time on a multi-plane animation stand.

Preparations for the Forest: A Portrait of David Footer

Documentary

by Daniel Mooney

Melrose, MA. 10 min.



Filmed over the course of four years, wildlife artist and taxidermist David Footer looks back at his time on planet earth and considers his place in the cosmos, while ruminating on the shallow threshold

between life and death.



A one-shot short film following an unsupervised little girl as she wanders into her neighbor's house looking for her lost dog.

Rosie, Oh

Narrative

by Andy Koeger

Los Angeles, CA. 9 min.





The Day Truffaut Died

Animation

by John Akre

Minneapolis, MN. 4 min.

“On the day that filmmaker Francois Truffaut died, I was a model for a Retinal Photography class. This animated short is about the loss of a mentor hero, even if he was one that I never met.” Musician Andy Stermer, wrote and performed a music track that perfectly evokes the films of Truffaut, and the quirky character of the filmmaker’s story.



The King

Narrative

by Frederic Casella

Dorset, UK. 12 min.



An urban fairy-tale about Elliot, a kid on the make. He has stolen drugs and runs to meet gangsters he knows to make his first deal. On the way, he bumps into friends and they convince him to join them

as they head to the local launderette. Once there, Elliot gets into an argument with the owner, Sharon, a loan-shark. Just as things heat up they are interrupted by a mysterious stranger who begins to tell them a very unusual tale.

The Muse of San Francisco

Documentary

by Katrine Holmgren

London, UK. 22 min.



A portrait of actress and model Linda Martinez at age 79. Linda was a life drawing/pin up model and actress in underground art films - many made by the renowned avant-garde filmmaker George

Kuchar. In *The Muse of San Francisco*, the filmmaker sets off to find out who the enigmatic Linda Martinez really is.



We R the World/Mold

Experimental

by Dawn George, Halifax
Nova Scotia, Canada. 7 min.

Up close, mold is an intricate mass of branching filaments and fruiting bodies creating a connected web. When viewed from a distance mold loses its complexities and its destructive nature emerges. Through time-lapse photography, computer-generated imaging, and animation techniques, the phenomena of growth is explored as something delicate, magnificent and even necessary; challenging the way we comprehend our existence as individuals and as a collective organism.





We Regret to Inform You

Documentary

by Eva Colmers and Heidi Janz
Quebec, Canada. 11 min.

Why does our society divide people into neatly-defined categories? Are “disabled” and “productive” mutually exclusive identities? Where do you place somebody with a strong mind and a weak



body? Dr. Heidi Janz, a writer and an academic, is acutely aware of the limitations posed by her uncooperative body, but every day she navigates the world in her wheelchair and works very hard to make her impaired speech comprehensible to others. This film documents Heidi’s daily regime, and quietly questions our ideas around “either/or.”

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**Congratulations to
The Black Maria Film Festival**

In Memoriam: Tom Gannon

On June 10th, 2016, the Black Maria Film Festival lost one of its most loyal supporters and a true lover of independent film – Tom Gannon.

Tom was a life-long resident of Jersey City and served as the evening manager and chief sound technician in the Media Arts Department at New Jersey City University for 30 years. He was a devoted student of cinema history and aesthetics and never failed to seek out the most original and exceptional films. Tom was a deep thinker and the most empathetic soul I've ever known.



Tom lived around the corner from NJCU, or “State” as it is still known by so many early Media Arts Department graduates from Jersey City State College. He was still a student when the Black Maria Film Festival was invited to take up residence in Media Arts, and where it has resided for the past 30 odd years.

Tom once wrote, “I have never been married, nor do I have any children; therefore, my relationship with the University and the department in particular is the longest attachment I have ever had. Indeed, if I had continued in my freelance career, and before Jane presented this rewarding opportunity, I have no idea what my life would be like.

This job has given me the opportunity of meeting hundreds of wonderful students (many of whom are working in the field), and brilliant professors (many of whom I consider good friends). I can never express the gratitude I have to the University for helping my life develop to this point.

The years have helped to make me the person I am today. I will always be grateful to the University and the department for the time I have spent, the things I have learned, and most important, for the people I have met.”

Tom always “moved like he had a purpose.” He loved us all and we will always love him.

Back in ten my friend.

Jane Steuerwald

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Black Maria Film Festival Jurors 2017

Henry Baker works in video, television, film, sound, print and interactive media. In 1987, he founded his video company BXB in NYC. Clients include HBO, Cinemax, SONY, Panasonic, Four Seasons Hotels and many others. At BXB he received numerous awards for his creative work in video and television including: Houston International Film Festival, Broadcast Designer's Association, ACE and IFTA awards.

His work has been screened at various locations including: Leslie Lohman Gallery, National Museum of LGBT History, Simon Watson Gallery, Vancouver College, Hallwalls, Intermedia Arts Center, Matrix Gallery et al. His works are in the collections at The NY Public Library and the Everson Museum. He administered the Video Artist Grant Program at Synapse Video Center, Syracuse NY, serving ultimately as Director of the Center from 1978-81. At Synapse he also curated their video exhibitions and distribution programs. He served as a panelist at the National Endowment for the Arts, the WNET-TV Lab, the Broadcast Designer's Association and the Ithaca Video Project. In 2015, he served as a pre-screening juror at Black Maria Film Festival. Henry has given lectures at the International Television Society, Video Free America, Greenwich High School, Boston Film and Video Foundation and the San Francisco Art Institute. He co-founded the New York State Media Alliance.

A consummate sound aficionado, he produced regular radio broadcasts for over a decade at WAER-FM and WONO-FM. Henry has worked in film since the 1950s and video since the 1970s. He received a BFA in Media Communications and an MFA in Synaesthetic Education at Syracuse University. He later received an MS in Information and Library Science at Pratt Institute. He is currently Chief Creative Officer at BXB LLC, Washington DC.

Black Maria Film Festival Jurors 2017

Margaret Parsons is curator of film and media programs at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. Besides an international film exhibition program, the Gallery maintains an archival collection of documentary media on the arts. Parsons has organized media events for other organizations including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, American University, the National Archives, and the Smithsonian Museum of American History. She has served as a trustee for film organizations ranging from the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar to CINE, and she has been on the editorial boards for *The Moving Image* and the Getty Trust's experimental Art on Film in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has served as festival juror for numerous international film festivals including Washington, Nashville, Syracuse, Turin (Italy), and Tulcea (Romania).

Currently, Parsons is a member of the advisory board for the Washington DC Environmental Film Festival and curator for Glimmerglass Film Days, a festival she founded in central New York State. She has recently received awards for her work in film preservation from the governments of France, Georgia, and the Czech Republic, and in the U.S. has been the recipient of awards from the Black Maria, the Washington DC Independent Film Festival, and from Women in Film and Video. Her other interests include photography (35mm film and dark room), as well as naïve and outsider art which she collects. Her writing has been published in the journals *Raw Vision*, *Folk Art*, *The Folk Art Messenger*, *New York Folklore*, *Curator*, and *The Moving Image*.

**A Very Special Thanks to the Dedicated Group
of Pre-Screening Judges for the
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Ciara Broadway
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Steve Gorelick
Diana Hernandez
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Alabama Filmmakers Co-op, Flying Monkey Art Center, Huntsville, AL
American University of Rome, Rome, Italy
Anthology Film Archives, NY
Art House Productions, Jersey City, NJ
ArtsEmerson, Boston, MA
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Bentley University, Waltham, MA
Caldwell Merchants Association, Caldwell, NJ
Capri Theatre, Montgomery, AL
Centenary College, Hackettstown, NJ
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY
Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA
Florida SouthWestern State College, Fort Meyers, FL
Glimmerglass Film Days, Cooperstown, NY
Hoboken Historical Museum, Hoboken, NJ
Hoffstra University, Hempstead, NY
Long Beach Island Foundations of Arts and Sciences, Loveladies, NJ
Madison Arts and Cultural Alliance, Madison, NJ
Memorial Hall – Arts Night Out, Northampton, MA
Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools, E. Brunswick, NJ
Mohonk Mountain House, New Paltz, NY
Monmouth University, West Long Branch, NJ
Moviatic at the Midtown Cinema, Harrisburg, PA
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
New Jersey City University, Jersey City, NJ
Paramount Theatre, Charlottesville, VA
Point Park University, Pittsburgh, PA
Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ
Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
Richey Sun Coast Theatre, New Port Richey, FL
Roxie Theater, San Francisco, CA
Savannah College of Art and Design, Atlanta, GA
Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA
Secaucus Public Library, Secaucus, NJ
Thomas Edison National Historical Park, West Orange, NJ
University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
University of Delaware, Newark, DE
University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, UK
University of Wisconsin, Fond du Lac, WI
Upstate Films, Rhinebeck, NY
West Orange Film Society at the Essex Green Theater, West Orange, NJ

**Call for Entries for the 2018
Black Maria Film Festival
Mark Your Calendar - June 1, 2017**

The Black Maria Film Festival seeks spirited short films – under 60 minutes in length – that explore, enrich, and expand the expressive possibilities of film as art.

Black Maria is an open genre, touring festival welcoming animation, experimental, documentary, and narrative.

We will be accepting work for our 2018 season on June 1st, 2017.

**Submission fee is \$30
from June 1st through July 15th
for the Early Bird Deadline.**

**Submission fee is \$45
from July 15th through September 1st
for the Regular Deadline.**

**Submission Fee is \$60
from September 2nd through October 15th
for the Final Deadline.**

To enter, visit the Black Maria Film Festival website, www.blackmaria.org, after June 1st, 2017, go to “Call for Entries” and click on “Submission Guidelines,” or enter through Withoutabox.com.

Questions? Contact the Festival office at:
info@blackmariafilmfestival.org, 201-200-2043.



MFA in Integrated Media Arts Production (IMAP) is an interdisciplinary 2 year graduate program at New Jersey City University specifically geared toward independent media artists. Located 40 minutes from downtown Manhattan.

Application deadline May 15th!



njcu.cc/IMAP
tel: 201-200-3494 or imap@njcu.edu
New Jersey City University, Media Arts Department & IMAP
2039 Kennedy Boulevard Jersey City, New Jersey 07305-1597



We are proud to support the Black Maria Film Festival!

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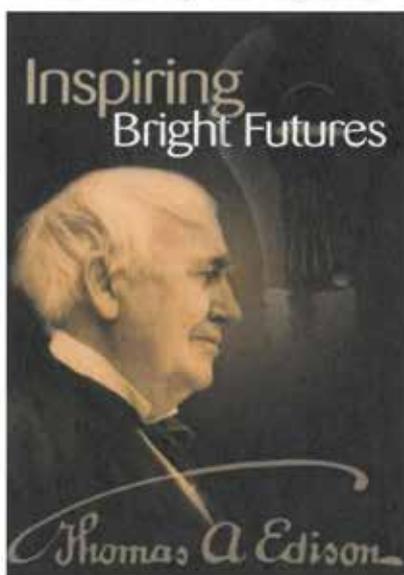
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